



Mental Health Toolkit for High School Athletes



Why is it important to be mindful of our Mental Health?

1. Our **mental and emotional** well-being can have a significant impact on our athletic and academic performance, injury risk, and recovery after injury.
2. Fear, worry, stress, anxiety, frustration, or sadness—among many other emotions—are **normal, human responses** to events in our lives.
3. When these emotions become **overwhelming** and start **impacting the ability to function** day-to-day, it is essential to assess for mental health concerns.

What can I do to improve my mental health?

1. Get sufficient sleep
 - **Recommended in adolescents:** 8-10 hours/night
 - **Insufficient sleep leads to** increased risk of infection or illness, difficulty focusing or concentrating, decreased learning and memory, decreased mood and motivation, decreased athletic and academic performance, increased injury risk, impaired recovery after injury
 - **Top Sleep Tips**
 - Avoid strenuous exercise or activity close to bedtime
 - Limit screens close to bedtime and silent mobile devices when sleeping
 - Try to go to bed and wake up at a consistent time
2. Manage Stress
 - Being overwhelmed and stressed can affect athletic and academic **performance**
 - Increases **injury** risk
 - Injuries, when they do occur, also increase stress which can impair recovery and lengthen the return to sport
 - **Wellness strategies to reduce stress**
 - Staying active and exercising
 - Spending time outdoors
 - Sleeping well
 - Avoiding overtraining and overcommitting yourself
 - Fueling your body properly (nutrition, hydration, avoiding caffeine)
 - Prioritizing and managing your time
 - Implementing relaxation, mindfulness, and/or meditation techniques

What are the warning signs of mental health concerns?

- **Depression**
 - Persistently feeling sad, empty, hopeless, tearful, or irritable
 - Loss of interest in activities, especially those that used to be enjoyable
 - Significant changes in weight, appetite, sleep, concentration, fatigue, or energy
 - Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
 - Unexplained aches, pains, or physical symptoms
 - Suicidal thoughts



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- **Anxiety**
 - Feeling constant dread or worry about multiple events or activities (work, home life, sports, school performance, etc...)
 - Feeling restless, irritable, on edge, jumpy, or tense
 - Significant changes in sleep, concentration, fatigue
 - Pounding heart, sweating, shortness of breath, nausea, or upset stomach
 - Avoidance and/or fear of certain situations
- **Recognize these warning signs early:** If you or someone you know (teammate, friend, classmate, athlete) is showing these warning signs, **support them and seek help** from a mental health professional, coach, athletic trainer, parent, or other adult you trust
- **Screening tools** for you or someone you know:
 - Multiple screening tools for different mental health concerns: <https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/>
 - <https://www.helpyourselfhelpothers.org/>
 - Symptom checklist for youth: <https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/youth/>

Resources

Behavioral Health Resources

<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>
Suicide Prevention Lifeline	Call 988
Crisis Text Line	24/7 live support by text: Confidential support Text TALK or MYLIFE to 741-741 Call 988
Sexual Assault & Abuse Hotlines	Call (800) 656-HOPE (4673); (800) 230-7526 Website: rainn.org
Teen Line (Peer Support Hotline)	Call (800) TLC-TEEN (6-10pm Pacific time zone) Text TEEN to 839863 (6-9pm Pacific time zone) Email & message boards: teenlineonline.org/talk-now
LGBT Youth Hotlines	<u>Trevor Line:</u> Website: thetrevorproject.org Call (866) 488-7386 (24/7) Text START to 678678 (Mon-Fri, 12-7pm Pacific time zone) <u>LGBT National Youth Talkline:</u> Website: glnh.org Call (800) 246-7743 (Mon-Fri 1-9pm, Sat 9am-2pm Pacific time zone)
National Eating Disorder Association	(800) 931-2237 (8:30am-4:30pm Pacific time zone) Website: nationaleatingdisorders.org
Suicide Prevention Resource Center - Adolescents	Website: https://www.sprc.org/populations/adolescents Provides resources related to adolescents
Youth Crisis Lines	California: 800-843-5200; Website: www.youthcrisisline.org



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Phone Applications

Phone Applications for Mindfulness/Meditation			
<i>Application Name</i>	<i>Device Compatibility</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Calm	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guided and unguided mindfulness meditation• Various lengths of time for practice• Includes breathing exercises	Free
Breath2Relax	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stress management education• Coaching on belly breathing (diaphragmatic breathing)	Free
Healing Buddies Comfort Kit	iOS only	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guided skills practice for pain and nausea• Helps identify feelings• Program suitable for school-aged children• Explanation of application and concepts targeted to children• Discussion of different coping techniques (belly breathing, relaxation, imagery, positive self-talk)• Parent information to support children with stressors• Encourages parent participation and advocacy	Free
Headspace	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guided meditation with animation• Exercises introduce each concept (meditation, guided imagery, & more)	Free trial, monthly fee
Smiling Mind	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guided meditation for ages 7 to adult• Different program for each age group (i.e., 13-15, 16-18)• Includes breathing exercises and daily mindfulness• Lengthy silences require focus on the users' part	Free
Stop, Breathe & Think	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guided relaxation and mindfulness activities including meditation, breathing, yoga, guided journaling, & more• Activity recommendations personalized to how you feel on a given day, based on daily check-ins	Free
Insight Timer	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library of guided meditations, calming music, yoga classes, & more• Targets sleep, anxiety, and stress• Live events also available to stream	Free
Healthy Minds	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combination of podcast-style lessons and both seated and active meditations• Teaches skills to help improve emotional well-being	Free

Phone Applications for Anxiety and Depression			
<i>Application Name</i>	<i>Device Compatibility</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Mindshift	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps track anxiety triggers and situations• Contains relaxation exercises and coping strategies• Ability to tag favorite categories• Provides concrete examples to address situations• Choice of male or female voice	Free



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Phone Applications for Anxiety and Depression (continued)			
eQuoo	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile game to teach psychological skills to help cope with emotional and mental stressors • Focuses on resilience, personal development, interpersonal relationship skills, and skills for coping with anxiety and depression 	Free
Sanvello	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinically validated techniques for reducing stress and treating anxiety and depression • Daily mood tracking, coping tools, techniques, weekly check-ins • Includes techniques from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy • Different levels of membership including therapy sessions at highest level 	Free trial, then self-pay +/- insurance coverage
Phone Applications for Sleep Hygiene			
<i>Application Name</i>	<i>Device Compatibility</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Cost</i>
CBT-i	Android & iOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy • Provided education on good sleep hygiene practices • Has relaxation tools such as guided imagery, diaphragmatic breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation coaching 	Free

Online Tools

<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>
Kaiser Permanente Guided Imagery Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/southern-california/health-wellness/podcasts • User friendly and easy access: download or stream online • Audible and visual options • Podcasts available for different concerns: pain, sleep, stress, anxiety, relaxation, & more • Suitable for adolescents • Variable podcast lengths ranging from a couple minutes to an hour
Pain Management Network Relaxation Techniques and Mindfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/chronic-pain/painbytes/pain-and-mind-body-connection/relaxation-techniques-and-mindfulness • Step by step structured guidance to build relaxation techniques and mindfulness
Mental Health America Youth Information & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://screening.mhanational.org/youth/ • Articles and Podcasts on common mental health issues and topics affecting adolescents and young adults
UC San Diego Center for Mindfulness Guided Audio & Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://medschool.ucsd.edu/som/fmph/research/mindfulness/programs/mindfulness-programs/MBSR-programs/Pages/audio.aspx • Guided activities of various lengths including meditation, yoga, body scans, mindful movement

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References

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